

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

Writing and Distributing a Media Advisory

A media advisory is a simple way to inform local media about an upcoming press conference, briefing, or other event, such as your organization's activities celebrating **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. You can distribute this document to media in advance of your event to provide print, broadcast, cable, and Internet reporters with the basic details about your event and where and when it will be held.

The purpose of a media advisory is not to tell the complete story, but instead to entice media to attend your event to learn more. If your event will feature a photo opportunity that local media may wish to pursue such as the finish line of a fundraising race, you may want to include a line in your advisory highlighting the photo opportunity to encourage media attendance. Both print and broadcast media have a need for compelling visual images in their stories.

Writing a Media Advisory

As you prepare for your **Recovery Month** event, refer to the media advisory template at the end of this fact sheet, which can be customized as needed. You may use this template as the basis of your media advisory, making sure to edit it as necessary (particularly updating all placeholders that have been highlighted in bold and listed in brackets throughout the advisory) to customize it for your event. Electronic versions of these materials and other templates are available on the CD-ROM included in this planning toolkit, as well as on the **Recovery Month** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov.

When writing your media advisory, keep it short (no more than a page). The most essential components are the details of the event: what it is, where it is taking place, and the day and time it will begin and who is participating (mention local civic and policy leaders, etc.). It is crucial to include a contact name and telephone number that media can call in advance.

You may wish to include local statistics about the number of people in your state who have substance use disorders, while stating that the impact is much greater when children and families of people with these disorders are included; family members need recovery support services as well.

To obtain localized information, contact the Single-State Agency (SSA) in your state, which is listed in the SSA Directory included in the "Resources" section of this planning toolkit. Inquire about both public and private patient census information, and ask about services that are available in the state for affected family members. More state-related information is found in the **2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings**, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This survey is available through SAMHSA's Web site at www.oas.samhsa.gov, where state substance use data reports also are available.

Distributing a Media Advisory

Following are some suggestions for successfully distributing your advisory.

Place it on the “daybooks” and in “week-ahead” columns. “Daybooks” are daily listings of all activities that media are invited to attend: they are not read by the general public. In contrast, “week-ahead” columns reach a wider audience because they are published in local newspapers and business publications. Both of these tools can help you spread the word about your event.

Look up newswire services (e.g., Associated Press and Reuters) via the Internet (search engines will pull up the information) and call the local bureaus in your city or state and ask for the name of the daybook editor and that person’s fax number. Fax your advisory and ask the daybook editor to place it on the newswire’s “daybook” the week before, the day before, and the day of the event. (Some media services, such as PR Newswire, charge for posting such information, so you may wish to inquire first.) Also, call local newspapers and business publications that feature upcoming activities, asking them to place the advisory in their “week-ahead” columns or calendar listings to encourage community members to attend your event.

Create a media list. Send the advisory to local media outlets in your community one week before your event. To do so, you should develop a current media list—a fundamental tool that organizes information about reporters. Your list of media outlets must be accurate and up to date to effectively reach reporters with your story. This list also can be used when distributing your press release, which will contain more information about your event. A press release template is included in this planning toolkit.

Here are some tips on creating a media list:

- Check your local library or bookstore for media directories of daily and weekly newspapers, television stations, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters, and business trade publications in your community. Examples of media directories include Bacon’s directories, the *Yellow Book*, and *The Gebbie’s Press All-In-One Media Directory*. Use the phone book or the Internet to supplement your list.
- Once you have developed a list of phone numbers and addresses, call each outlet to verify the information and to determine which editors and reporters, such as health reporters, are the most appropriate for your news.
- Using the information gathered above, create a list with the name of each media outlet, its address, telephone number, fax number, and the names and titles of specific reporters or editors who cover substance use disorder treatment and health-related issues. Today, most reporters and editors prefer information to be e-mailed to them, so secure an e-mail address when possible. When calling to verify contact information, you also should ask about the best time to call each reporter about your event (i.e., how far in advance/what time of day).

- Include specialized media on your list, such as African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or other minority newspapers or radio stations. Other specialized media include university/college newspapers; television, cable, and radio stations; small community papers or neighborhood newsletters; and publications produced by local organizations, such as businesses, hospitals, women's centers, health care clinics, professional associations, mental health organizations, churches and other faith-based institutions, drug stores, and local civic clubs.

Follow up. After you e-mail or fax the media advisory, contact reporters by phone to determine their interest in attending and/or covering the event. This type of personal effort often can make a difference in generating media interest.

You are encouraged to share your plans and activities for *Recovery Month* 2005 with SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, your colleagues, and the general public by posting them on the official *Recovery Month* Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov.

We would like to know about your outreach efforts and community success stories during *Recovery Month*. Please complete the Customer Satisfaction Form enclosed in this planning toolkit. Directions are included on the form.

Please send any of your organization's *Recovery Month* promotional samples to:
Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 1 Choke Cherry Road, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20857.

Sample *Recovery Month* materials are available electronically on the CD-ROM enclosed in this planning toolkit. For additional *Recovery Month* materials, visit our Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov or call 1-800-662-HELP.

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[Please adapt as needed for your event.]

[Date]

Media Advisory

[Name of Business] Holds Forum to Address the Importance of Offering Employees Access to Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs

—[State/Local] Businesses Help Improve Community by Increasing Access to Care—

An estimated [number] of people in [state/community] suffer from substance use disorders, yet many cannot afford quality care. To address this, [business name] will host a community forum on [date] to discuss the business and societal benefits of businesses offering substance use disorder treatment services and support to their employees.

The forum is part of the 16th annual observance of *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)*, a nationwide celebration of those in recovery from substance use disorders. [Business name] will address this year's *Recovery Month* theme, “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Healing Lives, Families, and Communities*,” by discussing how investing in effective treatment—and referring workers and their family members to these treatment and other recovery support services—can help get community members and their families into recovery together and enable people in recovery to lead productive, healthy lives.

[Business name] also will discuss ways other local businesses can provide access to treatment programs through their workplaces.

WHO: [participants]
WHEN: [date and time]
WHERE: [address of location]
CONTACT: [name and phone number of primary contact for event]

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